
How to Become a Virtual Mentor

*Helping a school
personalize the learning*



Steve McCrea
A virtual mentor of
Highland Park High School
in Los Angeles

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Permissions: I have not sought permissions from the people who wrote the words that I've quoted. I've quoted short passages from websites and I've presented an active link, so that you can visit the page easily by clicking the PDF of this book.

The net proceeds from the publication of this book will go to support schools like Highland Park High School, where learning is personalized.

This is version 1.

Future editions will have more thoughts and fewer errors.

This book is a first effort to get something in print.

Dedicated to

The students of Highland Park High School
in Los Angeles

*You students might be the future
(since you are the next generation),
but you are also part of my present*

to Enrique Gonzalez
*Your focus on “personalized learning”
guides me in my teaching.*

It is often more enjoyable to “have written”
than to “write” or to “be in the
middle of writing” a book.
My wife makes the writing easier by
shielding me from the real world.
Thank you, JK.

The editing conventions in this book: I don't focus on changes in font. If you see a font that is not Baskerville (which is the font that you are looking at right now), then the piece is probably pasted in from another source (usually a web page or email message). The change of font indicates that there is another author. Sometimes the spacing between lines and the style of attribution are not consistent in this book. If you would like to offer your time to improve the look of this book, terrific. CreateSpace allows free updates to editions.

This is an experimental sort of book.

It's a collection of photos by mentors.

It's a collection of essays and observations.

It's a step-by-step manual for people who want to become mentors

It's an attempt to draw attention to a small school.

This book gives examples showing how to bring pieces of the real world into a high school. I hope you will take time to click on links to some of the resources mentioned here.



**The
student
is the
class.**

Transform-Education.com

I hope you will take time to click here:

www.TransformTeaching.org

www.Transform-Education.com

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The Making of This Book

Introduction

At first glance, you might think, “Hey, this is a rather thin book.”

In truth, it is. It’s meant to be read quickly and then passed along. It’s meant to be read quickly and then passed along. I like the advice of David Ogilvy, the 20th Century master of public relations: “Most topics can be covered in two pages.”

This book's PDF version has “HOT LINKS.” That means you can click on certain words with colored letters (if you are reading the PDF) and go to a website.

In fact, you don’t need to buy the book. You can get this book free from **TransformTeaching.org**, since the PDF was uploaded to my Google Drive account and I put the link on my **sites.google.com/site/transformteaching** page.



A Virtual Mentor could have taken this photo.

For Mentors

Why Do Schools Need Mentors?

Here's a piece that I wrote while I was a teacher in a middle school in 2005 in Fort Lauderdale. I wrote it to attract mentors to the school.

An open letter to parents and other potential mentors

Mentors and The New Three “R”s

By Steve McCrea, Tutor and Mentor

I'm a tutor for middle school students, so I often get asked: “What should my child be studying?” “Can you recommend a good web site to help him get ahead?” “My child has difficulty reading—can you tutor him?” Parents could bring a new question to their child's teacher: “What should parents be learning about?” I would answer, “Did you catch that important speech given by Bill Gates?”

In February 2005, Bill Gates gave a landmark speech at a conference of governors praising small schools. I missed it, and chances are that you did, too, because the speech was overwhelmed by the media's focus on the Michael Jackson trial and Terri Schiavo.

Here's the essence of what Gates said:

“Successful schools are built on principles that can be applied anywhere. These are the new three Rs, the basic building blocks of better high schools: The first R is Rigor – making sure all students are given a challenging curriculum that prepares them for college or work. The second R is Relevance – making sure kids have courses and projects that clearly relate to their lives and their goals. The third R is Relationships – making sure kids have a number of adults who know them, look out for them, and push them to achieve.”

If I were a parent, I would look around for adults to volunteer to come into my child’s school. What is Gates really saying?

“Education is everyone’s business” (even his business).

If you want to help reshape education while getting more attention for your child, make an effort to become a mentor. You don’t have to be a parent to provide this valuable service (to yourself as well as to the community).

Guidelines

Stay focused. Yes, school administrators need volunteers to help with photocopying, newspaper recycling, reorganizing closets, and raising funds. Be sure to ask to work as a teacher’s assistant. Your value as a mentor comes from talking with students.

Listen. Most visitors to a school stand at the front of the classroom and give a short talk. Instead, you could spend time in a corner of the room with a small group of students finding out if there’s any “click” or connection. Ask the students, “What is your passion? What do you like to read about?” Many kids just need a chance to talk in order to discover their interests.

Return. Often. Frequent contact makes a difference. It takes seven exposures for most people to learn a new concept and many kids need to see an adult several times before your “message” gets through. Promise to return, then follow through.

Be anticipated. Plow one row deeply to raise expectations: Return to the same classroom rather than visiting six different classrooms.

You don’t need a speech or special talent. Just get in the classroom, often. Your presence is a present to students who see the same adults in the identical profession (teaching). Your experience in other professions will help the student more than any academic expertise you have. Who cares how poorly you did in biology or European history when you were in high school? If you are current on your mortgage, that says something, too.

Remember what Gates said: “Make sure kids have a number of adults who know them, look out for them, and push them to achieve.”

If you’re curious about how a school works with mentors, visit BigPicture.org and watch the videos online. The Met, a Big Picture school in Providence, Rhode Island, is where the new three “R”s were developed. The formula mentioned by Gates appeared in Dennis Littky’s book, *The Big Picture: Education Is Everyone’s Business*.

I could write more, but I’m preparing for a meeting – a meeting at a school. You see, I’m a mentor, too.

Steve McCrea is a tutor in Fort Lauderdale.

Let's think of the obstacles that adults face when they want to be a mentor:

Travel time

To spend 45 minutes in a classroom, many mentors invest 30 minutes to drive and park near the school.

Time away from work

That's nearly two hours of work time, which could be as much as \$100 (at \$50 per hour).

Contact time per visit

Most volunteers who come to a school speak at a group of 20 to 35 students. There are a few questions from the audience and the session is over. Unless the teacher video records the talk, many kids won't remember what the visitor said.

Remedy: I prefer when the mentor sits with three or four students and talks *WITH* them (listening, more than speaking). I like it when the mentors follow up with telephone or email “visits.”

Number of visits

Many volunteers drop by once a year for “career day.”

Remedy: Invite visitors to stop by at least every two or three weeks and meet with the same three to six students. Better: Call or get updated by email.

Approvals

What does a principal, director, secretary, receptionist or teacher see when an adult walks into a school? **“Stranger.” “Warning! Warning! Focus on the front door!”** That’s why many adults do not feel encouraged to visit a school. Look at the typical list of approvals that the school must issue. Broward County in Florida has an approval system called getinvolvedineducation.com, which is a low-cost screening process. The only cost to the adult is the time spent in navigating a website.

The next chapter will address most of these obstacles by making the adult disappear. That's right: the best mentor in many situations might be virtual.



John the Virtual Mentor drove along the Lewis and Clark Trail.
Some of his photos appear in this book.

The photos break up the book's text, provide some eye candy to help reluctant readers get into the book, and might inspire some people to search Wikipedia for some basic information about the Lewis and Clark journey.

waymarking.com/waymarks/WM25GB_Lewis_and_Clark

What is a Virtual Mentor?

Virtual mentors are like “face-to-face” mentors, but without a lot of the travel and waiting around.

It’s not a new idea.

It’s very expensive to participate as a mentor: It's your time. The older I get, the more valuable time gets. The “face-to-face” part of a school visit can be provided by a video phone like Skype or Google Talk.

If we can figure out a way to get the mentor's voice to the school, then the physical presence of the mentor in the school is not needed.



www.virtual-mentor.net

A search on the Internet provides these links:

<http://www.virtual-mentor.net>

Contact **helpdesk@virtual-mentor.net**

www.collegebound.org/virtual-mentoring

Here's what the website collegebound.org shows:

“Mentoring is one of the most rewarding volunteer roles and, ideally, involves an enduring commitment to a personal relationship. During such a relationship, both mentors and young people experience many benefits. Together, they achieve realistic short-term goals that address the larger, more complex problems a young person faces”- National Mentoring Partnership. (This photo comes from a mentoring website.)



The images on these two pages comes from the websites about virtual mentoring. I hope you will take a moment and visit www.Virtual-mentor.net

What is “Virtual Mentoring”?

Virtual volunteering means mentors working with students from a distance, primarily communicating via telephone, Internet, e-mail, Facebook, etc. Virtual mentoring shares the goal of face-to-face mentoring: establishing a trusting, nurturing, positive relationship between the mentor and student (mentee).

The Virtual Mentoring Program (VMP) is an extension of our Academic Mentoring Program. College Bound students who matriculate into a college or university are eligible for continued support through the Virtual Mentoring Program. College Bound

alumni are assigned a “virtual mentor” who will serve as a resource for students while in their first year of college, supporting a fluid transition. College Bound hopes that virtual mentors will mentor students through the duration of college, serving as a valuable support system. In many cases, the “virtual” mentor will be the partner who has been a part of the student’s life for much of high school. In some cases, new mentors will be assigned

Virtual Mentoring



"Mentoring is one of the most rewarding volunteer roles and, ideally, involves an enduring commitment to a personal relationship. During such a relationship, both mentors and young people experience many benefits. Together, they achieve realistic short-term goals that address the larger, more complex problems a young person faces"-National Mentoring Partnership.

Virtual Mentors appear in other parts of life. I found a newspaper article in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette about a network that helps entrepreneurs:

The goal of the MyBoard virtual platform is to allow mentors and those they are helping to post and exchange information on a communal website where they also can conduct live meetings -- even if everyone in the group is based in the Pittsburgh region, said Rebecca Harris, director of Chatham's Center for Women's Entrepreneurship.

"The point is to look at the interactive technology," she said. "If there are certain times a mentee and mentors can meet in person, that's great. But there could be one-hour travel time to and from meetings. So this gives them flexibility to schedule meetings when they want and maximize their time."

Launched in January, the program is funded by the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, the Alcoa Foundation and Bridgeway Capital. More than 40 mentors -- men and women -- have signed on to advise 10 women-owned businesses for a year. (24 March 2013)

Read more: post-gazette.com/stories/business/news/my-board-virtual-mentor-program-helps-entrepreneurs-develop-businesses-680584/#ixzz2RUoCjkgL

MyBoard virtual mentor program helps entrepreneurs develop businesses

March 24, 2013 12:04 am



Click image to enlarge



Robin Rombach/Post-Gazette

Karen Mosholder, owner of Bumbleberry Farms, with some of her hives at her rural Somerset home.

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If adults can get mentors, why not teenagers?

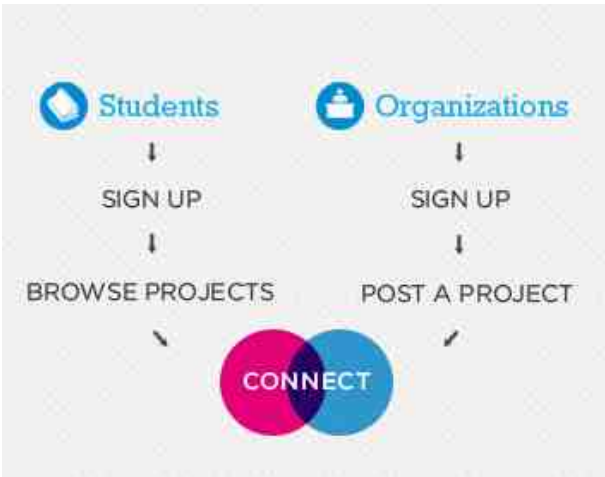
The search for terms like “virtual mentor” also delivered this webpage at <http://lifeinthegrid.com>:

Taking your business to the next level requires that you gain knowledge and more importantly wisdom. Do you have the right connections? Are you spending time getting the correct resources? Who are you taking your advice from? These and many other questions are the keys to the success of your business. In this article I'll be covering the steps I've taken to find what I call the “The Silent Virtual Mentor.” I'll discuss this new concept in mentoring and what you need to look for to allow this practice to accelerate the growth of your business.

From: lifeinthegrid.com/virtual-mentoring-the-smart-way

Some readers of this book might need a virtual mentor for business. Some students might think about looking for their mentors on

NetImpact.org offers to connect students and organizations.



Organizations post projects. Students sign up and look for projects.



Students turned in their homework on USB flash drives. Why? The students don't have easy access to the Internet, so they can't send their work by email or post their work on digital portfolios online. Professor Dani is in the photo. There's more to this photo and if you want the background, please contact me.

Let's learn more about NetImpact.org. Here's their logo:



Search for "Projects for Good."

<https://netimpact.org/learning-resources/learning-opportunities/student-skill-builders/projects-for-good>

Tips for Mentors about Selecting the School

Before becoming a virtual mentor, I was limited by the idea that I needed to commit time and energy to a particular location. This involved coordinating with the teacher and the school, getting approvals for going onto the campus...

I volunteered to read at a middle school (it was called “My Favorite Book” and the mentor was asked to bring the book and read a passage from the book, then answer questions). I changed the event into “**What do you want to know?**” and I listened to the questions by students. I got that idea from Neil Postman's book, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, especially chapter 12.

Try listening to your students for a day or two. We do not mean reacting to what they say. We mean listening. This may require that you do some role-playing. Imagine, for example, that you are not their teacher but a psychiatrist (or some such person) who is not primarily trying to teach but who is trying to understand. Any questions you ask or remarks you make would, therefore, not be designed to instruct or judge. They would be attempts to clarify what someone has said. If you are like most teachers, your training has probably not included learning how to listen.

*Therefore, we would recommend that you obtain a copy of **On Becoming a Person** by Carl Rogers. The book is a collation of Rogers's best articles and speeches. Rogers is generally thought of as the leading exponent of non-directive counseling, and he is a rich source of ideas about listening to and understanding other people.*

You probably will not want to read every article in the" book, but do not overlook 'Communication: its blocking and facilitation'. In this article Rogers describes a particularly effective technique for teaching listening: the students engage in a discussion of some issue about which they have strong feelings. But their discussion has an unusual rule applied to it. A student may say anything he wishes but only after he has restated what the previous speaker has said to that speaker's satisfaction.

Astounding things happen to students when they go through this experience. They find themselves concentrating on what others are saying to the point, sometimes, of forgetting what they themselves were going to say. In some cases, students have a unique experience. They find that they have projected themselves into the frame of mind of another person. You might wish to make this special listening game a permanent part of your weekly lessons. But, of course, you ought to try it yourself first.

*It is important for us to say that **the principal reason for your learning how to listen to students is that you may increase your understanding of what the students perceive as relevant** . The only way to know where a kid is 'at' is to listen to what he is saying. You can't do this if you are talking.*

*Neil Postman, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*.*

Enrique's School in Los Angeles

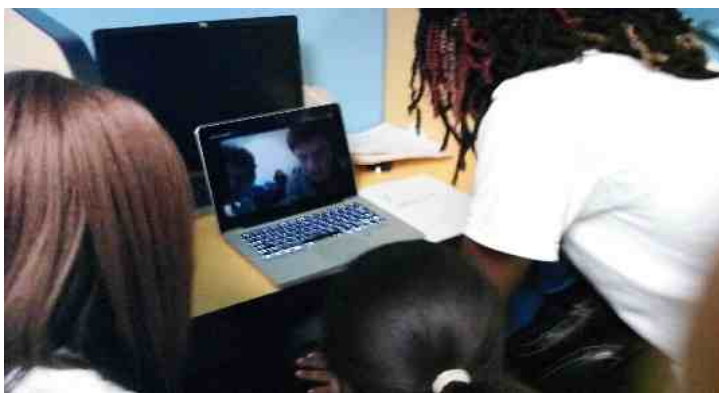
In 2009 I was in Los Angeles to look at Big Picture schools (www.BigPicture.org gives a list). I had heard of the Frida Kahlo High school and the website looked promising (projects and interactive methods). I called the school around 1 p.m. And asked if it would be possible to visit. “We're having a parent's night and a barbecue, starting at 5 p.m. Why don't you come then?” That's how I met Enrique Gonzalez, the principal.

Enrique gave me a tour, answered my questions and gave me his email address. We kept in touch over the next three years and then I became interested in becoming a virtual mentor. I happened to be passing through LA, so I contacted Enrique. By then he was at Highland Park High School.

I asked if I could speak with a small group. The twelve students in the group created three posters. I offered to assist them in creating a “Yearbook on DVD” and there was some interest. Enrique arranged for Greg, Rachel, Ireland and Drake (GRID) to do a project at distance with me. We're in the middle of that project while I'm compiling this book. I give a fuller account of “how I connected with HPHS” in the next chapter.

Visit first, then go virtual

I've learned that the easiest way to become a virtual mentor is to visit a school, develop a connection with some of the students, and then maintain contact at distance. My hope is that the project (the Yearbook or whatever the GRID creates) will demonstrate to students at Highland Park that they won't waste their time if they send me a question by email or via a text message.



*Students in Florida talk with
students in Florianópolis, Brazil.*



*One way to choose a school is to search for the school on YouTube.
Highland Park High School has an engaging video on the web.
Here are some excerpts from the video*

For the Love of Learning

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A34AR57A1Eo>

*a visit to Highland Park High School
camera work and production by Erik Friedl*



The student in this section of the video said:

*The kids here all have a story [to tell] while we're here
in other schools, teachers just teach you the lesson on the board.
Here, we have an opportunity to work on that subject for a couple of days.*

Tips about the Visit to the School

There is an advantage to visiting the school – then, when the students contact you, the virtual mentor, they have an image in their mind's eye about who the virtual mentor is.

General principles

Make the visits short (less than one hour). It's better to have a series of short visits than to come once a year for “career day.”

Give out a contact number and get email and mobile phone numbers. Some students don't interact well on email, since they prefer to text by phone or send messages via Facebook.

Request permission to contact students. Some school systems have rules that allow adults to write to student only to answer specific questions.

Bring books. Donate books. Create a lending library in a classroom and encourage students to borrow the books. Put “entry points” on the edges of the books so students get a hint about what single page reveals an important theme or an example of the author's view of the world.

Take photos of artwork. Collect examples of the students' creativity and get permission to post the items on a blog or your Facebook. You might even see something that they are doodling on a scrap of paper while you're talking.

Become a curator. Use the photos to highlight the work of students. Then send a link of the post to the principal and some of the students. Get them excited about being on the Internet.

Share your experience with other adults. Spread the link of the article that you wrote in your blog. Or share the link of the photo album that you posted on your Facebook account. Spend some time letting people now that you appreciate what the students have accomplished. Here's how I reported on my visit:
theindependenteducator.blogspot.com/2013/04/students-at-highland-park-high-school.html

Invite other adults to come with you the next time you visit.

Bring a project. Ask students to help you with a project you are working on. In my case, I told them that I needed a poster (details below).

Ask to meet with a small group of students, fewer than 20 if possible. Then interact with them. Get their names and ask them what they plan to learn to do after they leave high school.

Listen more than you talk. There's a clear message in Dennis Littky's book *The Big Picture: Education is Everyone's Business*. Here's the quote that floats in my head when I'm speaking to students.

Unfortunately, to most people, teaching is the giving of knowledge. What are you going to tell the students? What is your expertise? But teaching is really about bringing out what's already inside people. (Dennis Littky)

Here's a link to a list of quotations where you will find this Littky quote:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BBJkYv5aYvs1VL4pglv0EIZ4Ao5isEbj7Xeh8I_0suU/edit

Plan the next visit. Ask how long the students will need to complete the project that you asked them to do.

Here's how I managed the visits to Highland Park High School:

I planned a two-time visit, squeezing a visit to nearby Nightingale Middle School while I was in the area.

On February 8, I proposed to Enrique that I could visit the school. That amount of notice gave the principal time to look up schedules.

On February 26 I stopped in for an hour. Enrique gave me a short tour and we interrupted some classes. There's a certain value in an interruption. Research shows that we tend to remember more details from a movie that has commercial interruptions than when we see the movie as one piece. The interruptions are annoying, but the brain has to think, "What was happening before the action stopped?"

After the tour, I asked to have time to walk around and take photos. At that time I mentioned that I could come by in two days and lead a 45-minute workshop.

"Whatever works for you," replied Enrique. "We can work with your schedule. We appreciate your time."



After I interacted with students, taking some photos, I moved on to Nightingale school (see my blog about the Nightingale Initiative by Pearson). You can get the report (which includes a description of the D3 Lab). Search "new learning institute d3"

newlearninginstitute.org/d3-lab.

Search: nightingale initiative new learning institute

Get the PDF (it's over 23 MB).

media.newlearninginstitute.org/downloads/NightingaleInitiative.pdf

The images are property of Pearson and I was asked not to reproduce the document. Please take a moment and visit this valuable report. I hope that every school that I work at has a similar report and design process to engage the community as partners with teachers and principals in building a community center (more than just a school). Mentors and virtual mentors have a place in a school that has a design process like Nightingale Middle School's plan.

Two days later...

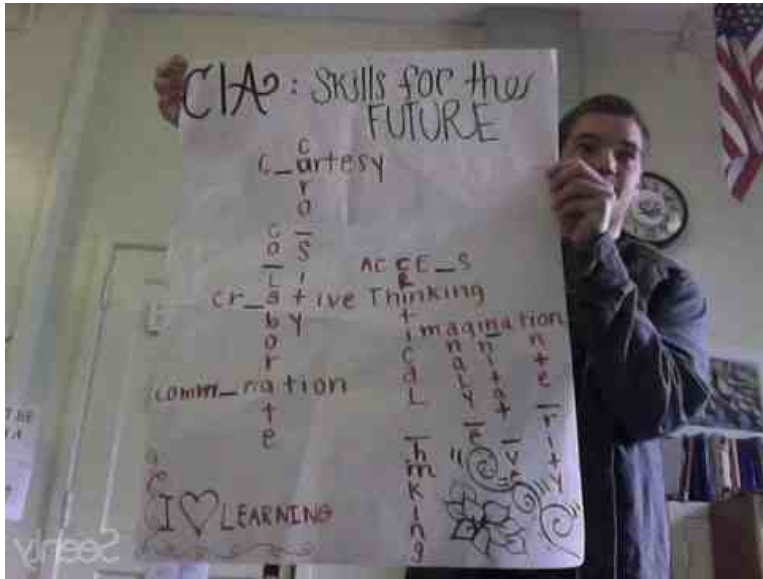
Enrique arranged for a group of students to be available. He pulled them out of their classes and threw me in to a narrow classroom where we had a meeting for 45 minutes. I presented the students with two blank sheets of poster paper and asked them to make a poster about “ANTs” (automatic negative thoughts, a concept by Daniel Amen), a poster about the keys to opening doors (called “LASSIE”) and a poster about the 10 Skills for the Global Economy (based on Tony Wagner's seven survival skills). Search “wagner seven seven skills” and read

<http://www.tonywagner.com/7-survival-skills>

*Wagner said he hears two things repeated constantly by today's employers: **"We need people who can ask good questions, and we need people who can engage others in thoughtful conversations."***

Wagner said the problem is that you can have all the equipment and technology you want, but "if you don't teach kids how to think, how to think beyond multiple choice, you've got a problem."

Wagner said teaching to the test not only limits students' ability to think for themselves, but also discourages students from studying subjects they love.



This is the creative way that the students laid out the key words. They left out some vowels so that the reader has to get involved in guessing “What word is that?”

*Wagner presented a list of seven “survival skills” that students need to succeed in today’s information-age world, taken from his book *The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don’t Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need—And What We Can do About It*.*

- Meris Stansbury, eSchool News

<http://www.edutechmag.org/2009/06/28/reviewing-tony-wagners-seven-skills-students-desperately-need/>

[illegible]

TransformTeaching.org

*Hi Steve,
I work with Dr. Daniel Amen on his social media.
He saw your students posters about ANTs and
he loved it! It will be shared on his social media
sites too.
Thank you for sending us the link!
Kirsten Iversen
Amen Clinics | Social Media*



I call this the “Six Keys to Unlock Doors to Success.”
I ask, “*What percent of the doors that you will face will be
unlocked with scores on your tests? Twenty years from now,
will anyone want to know your SAT score? But will knowing
another language unlock opportunities to you?*”

“What Do I Talk About with the Students?”

If you are not going to read the full chapter, then get this message:

Listen.

Ask questions.

Talk less.

Talk when the students ask you to talk.

Find a way for the student to try out a job, to visit a place of work, to do some work.

Can you arrange for an internship via the Internet?

Can the student do some remote work for your organization?

Can the student be a virtual intern?

Show the students the appendix (YourNetEffect.com) and ask students if they want to use some of their time on social media to “make something happen.”

The key difficulty I have with the word “mentor” is the idea that the mentor is somehow supposed to deliver something to the student and the student is somehow supposed to use the interaction to find a direction for the rest of the student's life. That's a lot of pressure.

Look at what some of the websites offer (adding to the pressure):

http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/occupations/a/info_interviews.htm

*The purpose of an informational interview is to get information about a field of work from someone who has some firsthand knowledge. When you are on an informational interview you should **not** ask for a job. This is not to say that an informational interview cannot lead to a job. In addition to helping you learn about a particular career, the informational interview is a way to start building a **network**. The person who is the subject of your informational interview today, may be the first person in your network many tomorrows from now. Here's another way an informational interview can benefit you. For those of us who are a little skittish about going on a job interview, the informational interview provides an non-threatening forum in which to get some practice. **(why not click on the link above and give the writer an extra hit?)***

According to this website, the mentor is a source of information (and the student is supposed to conduct an “informational interview”). However, the mentor can simply be another adult who cares about the student. There's no pressure for the adult (mentor) to have answers. It's for the student to make use of the situation.

Here's another link:

http://www.virtual-mentor.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=148:how-to-make-a-career-choice-when-you-have-no-idea-what-you-want-to-do&catid=16:news

Other Ways to Be a Mentor: Building Bridges, Digital Yearbooks, Reverse Internships and More

Building International Bridges (BIB)

This program offers to connect students in different countries. BIB Penpals is specially targeted at connecting U.S. Teenagers and young adults with teens and young adults in Europe, Asia, South America and Africa. U.S. Teens tend to be lazy about learning a second language, so why not take advantage of one of the strengths of the U.S. Teen? What do 4 billion people want?

A U.S. accent. What can U.S. teens offer? Teenagers can help international students practice speaking like a New Yorker, a Floridian or whatever.

www.BiBPenpals.com.

See the Youtube channel at **www.Youtube.com/bibpenpals**.

Reverse Internships

<https://sites.google.com/site/myaiglon/Home/internships>

Virtual Internships (update in Feb 2010)

Here's the letter that I wrote to Spirit:

Thank you for highlighting my letter. In answer to your question, the school has not yet implemented the "Ask a current student to help your business by telling you how to improve your website" but I have hopes...

I'm delighted with the T shirt and I'm showing my students the power of the pen... I wrote a thank you letter and I got a shirt in the mail. I'm even posting my delight online: SOUTHWEST AIRLINES LOVES LETTERS is the name of the movie that I put on youtube. www.youtube.com/mistermath

By the way, 95% of the students who enter Big Picture schools graduate: 5% dropout rate.

I hope Aiglon College will indeed think about the Virtual Intern program proposed in myaiglon.com

sites.google.com/site/myaiglon/Home/internships

The article REVERSE INTERNS is in the archives of the Spirit Magazine. In this excerpt from the article, editor Jay Heinrichs recommends letting the students do the teaching in the office.

I had this terrific idea the other day—two ideas, actually.

Terrific Idea No. 1: Instead of hiring young people as interns at our offices, we older types should try interning with them. Kids simply do some things better. Anyone with a 12-year-old knows who solves the family computer problems. The next social trend, the new new tech thing: These are mostly the bailiwick of the young.

Which leads to Terrific Idea No. 2: the remote internship. What if we hired young whizzes as consultants and communicated with them via some youth-friendly technology? Fly them in at the beginning and end of the contract—which, because of the remote nature, could last as long as a year. The kids benefit from the experience, and you get cheap work in a field you know nothing about. In other words, while students bear the title of intern, you're the real apprentice.

Call it remote internships, distance student consultation, junior outsourcing, or whatever. The important thing is the learning experience—not so much for them, but for you.

If you're in any kind of business, you're probably also in the media business to some degree. You do presentations, right? Have a website? Try to keep up with social networking, or actively avoid it? Whatever. If you're like me, you have some embarrassing gaps in knowledge and skills. And those gaps, I'm convinced, are a reason God created the young adult.

Jay Heinrichs is the editorial director of Spirit.

spiritmag.com/click_this/article/reverse_internships/



It's not the name of the airline. It's the name of one of the planet's most engaging magazines. I particularly like the "numbers" section. I'm introduced to three new statistics every time I fly Southwest Airlines. Click here, for example:

spiritmag.com/click_this/article/the_numbers_dishwasher_dilemma/

The Virtual Internship

The current student at Aiglon contacts the alumni that work in areas of interest to the current student. The Alumni assign work that is real and useful. If the task is completed, payment is given to the current student, teacher, and school endowment (according to the guidelines given below).

This idea builds on suggestions made for years by Bibi Parsons.

The burden of contact is on the TEACHER or the CURRENT STUDENT. The alumni are not going to scour the school looking for interns. The assumption is that if an alumnus submits a listing on this CATEGORY page, then there is some possibility of an internship. Interning can be done in person or virtually.

Current Students will enjoy a VI because any internship with an alumnus/a will convey value on the student's curriculum vitae. Let's show some REAL WORLD work before the age of 18, which is useful for university applications.

The Administration of the School will find Virtual Internships useful because Alumni will pay for services rendered and any value that is transmitted to the Alumni's businesses. It is proposed that 10% of the value of the project's profit could be donated to the school's endowment. An additional 10% of the profit generated could be distributed to the virtual interns and the teacher who coordinated the activity.

Alumni will find VIs useful because they will connect with the school, they will interact with smart teenagers, and they will have the input from the next generation.

Teachers will find Virtual Internships useful because an internship can link the student's passion to a real-world application of math or language or science. ("Let's contact Raymond Merz and see how he has used Boyle's law this week." -- Raymond can be reached at r.merz@rogers.com)

EXAMPLES

HERE IS A SUGGESTED FORM:

Project:

Description of the task:

Product:

IDEA #1

Project: Submission of articles to support a web site

Description of the task: I have articles that need to be submitted and I need more articles written. Please contact me for further description. Possible areas of interest are MATH and LANGUAGE SKILLS

Product: Articles for submission and for press releases to support my web sites www.FreeEnglishLessons.com and www.Roadlovers.com

IDEA #2

Project: Oral History Project

Description: Student goes to Gordon Dyke's house with a digital camera and records one of Gordon's meditations and asks him to talk about expeditions. A yearbook could be brought to stimulate the memory.

Product: Short videos that can be uploaded to the Oral history project on www.MyAiglon.com

IDEA #3

PROJECT: Recording of meditations for uploading to Youtube

Description: Current staff can sit with a student (the virtual intern) and the VI records the staff person reading a meditation while the camera is pointed at Les Dents du Midi.

Product: a video with a good audio recording of an inspiring meditation to share with the world and remind alumni of the power of the Aiglon Meditation. TS, ES, DR, LL and others need to be recorded, too.

I hope some students will read these pages and get inspired to create a project for a virtual internship.



Hemingway's grave in Idaho.
Photo by John the virtual mentor.
John loves to read Ernest Hemingway's works.

Adventures of a Virtual Mentor

One way to fatten a book is to invite other people to write. The mentor whom I've identified here (John) is a tour guide who lives in other countries after working for six months each year.

I hope that teachers will read these email messages from John (the traveling tour guide mentor) and invite him to link with some of their students. John guards his privacy and limits the amount of information that is on the Internet, so he prefers that I act as a go-between. "Send me one or two students. I can't respond to more than that at a time." Send me a message with the subject line "*Pass this message to John the tour guide mentor.*"

Here are some of his observations along with some of his photos from various trips. The photos might provide topics for starting conversations.

Thoughts while sitting in a forest in Oregon

By John the Tour Guide Mentor

Its been a while but i am sitting in the woods in oregon on my own looking at a lake so i've got the kind of time to read and write again. I got through the alaska summer more or less, and i am driving from oregon to texas. Taking a look at the country. Very interested in the history, how it all came to be the way it is. I will pick up the lewis and clark trail in lewiston and clarkston on the snake river in a couple more days. By the time they reached there they were already in the new boats they had built in only a few days after they had crossed the continental divide in idaho and montana by horse, or on foot really i think the horses just carried their gear. And the snake goes into the columbia, into the pacific so by that point they were there although the rapids were bad on the snake. Lots of turnovers and boats broken on the rocks. How did they keep little things like their gunpowder dry i wonder.

The part i am interested in is when and where they decided to ditch the boats, how they conversed with the indians and got horses and instructions on how to maybe get through the massive mountains, and when and where and how to build boats again and head for the supposed ocean. I'm interested in what the continent was like back then. It wasn't that long ago but that untouched continent and the indians are a world away from what we have today. I could get a better grasp on what we are as a culture, what this country is, how it got this way.

Comment: This is the sort of meditation and reflexion that I want my students doing. Look at a textbook and ask, "How did they keep little things like their gunpowder dry?" That sort of wonder is a gift. John keeps his eyes open.

I've left his typing as it appears in his email messages to me. Why?

- a) Students can see that a clear argument can be made with typographical errors (spelling is not essential for good communication) and*
- b) Students who want practice at proofreading can try to find the 42 errors that appear in his writings in this book. Answers can be found by sending your suggestions for improving the appearance of these pages to*

TheEBookMan@gmail.com.

Open Space

By John the Tour Guide Mentor

Beautiful country dwellings on acreage, everywhere, mostly empty, mostly lonely, probably second or third houses. It is the chicken in every pot. I wonder if americans had it their way we would all live on a clean fifty acre plot evenly distributed across the continent. Why do we struggle to wall ourselves off and put so much distance? Life is about people.

And whenever americans go to less developed countries they always want to buy a house, get their plot. What for?

It is incredible for the size of the land mass and all the mountains how quickly a few people took it, logged it, moved the indians out. They replaced ten thousand years of colonisation over such a big area and all these mountains in just seventy years. Was there really so little room that a few people changed the whole continent in just one life span? What were they after?

What are we still after, i wonder how different we are nowadays, it wasnt that long ago: we are a frenetic race, go go go, always moving, gotta be doing something. The mansion on every hill in liquid, drive form.



A Slower Pace of Life

By John the Tour Guide Mentor

I have to go to other countries for a slow down in pace, for something more human, and yet in another way i seem to be the same: nomadic, tied to nowhere, keep looking for something new, to discover something, make it my own then move on. We are all part of a very quick recent post industrial explosion. We live in places we know little about and have no ancestors there. Instead of accepting a place in a way as the indians did, knowing it, the seasons, the seasonal migrations, your people, we do the opposite. Now americans just want to buy new stuff. I turn on the radio in election time all i hear is americans need more jobs and more money. Seems to me we need to slow down and be more social. We could do with a lot less wealth and less of these slavish, grueling jobs. We all think we need more money than we do, that's consumerism at work. Living well doesn't require that much money but it does require people. I hear the indians only worked about twenty hours a week, and they were hunter/gatherers. You would think they might have had it a little harder. I don't see them rallying for more jobs at their council meetings. What is wrong with us?



Book Review

By John the Tour Guide Mentor

Along the way here i started reading a book called ***nickle and dimed***, on (not) making it in america. In 1998 this reporter took low wage jobs across america and wrote a book on how hard these jobs really are, how much they expect of you including selling out your innermost self to the corporation, and how miserable the 5, 6 dollar an hour pay, what it takes to get an apartment, even two jobs, etc. All this was written during a time of unheard of world historical prosperity way before the big recession which i maintain is not nearly as big a deal as they make it out to be. There is something to the timing of the job market in the micro picture but the deal we offer each other and accept in this country is bigger than that.

It was always this way. I would also argue that it isn't just a bad deal at the low wage level as we are led to believe, as the author of this book seems to believe. It is much bigger than that.

What finally got you in this country wasnt the recession. There are jobs. we don't want them. I suspect the end result would have been the same anytime you immigrated. We don't think life is about this bargain, it isn't supposed to be about this kind of trade off. We only have one shot and what americans got to offer, that isn't it.



*A scene from the YouTube video posted by Erik Friedl
Highland Park High School*

Two Poems: A Comparison By John

Two anti-consumeristic poems i sent mario written a hundred years apart over the time Thoreau said the same thing: everyone slow down. And Wordsworth wrote this in 1806 when lewis and clark were taking their enlightenment across the continent. I knew it, it is endemic in the very project of the country from the start. That pagan soul is the cuban soul, gone from the world. Polytheism. The Davies poem is the normal platitude we hear but don't believe. Wordsworth's is much bigger. He takes it one step further and affirms the big truth: we don't know what we are missing.

What is this life if full of care
We have no time to stand and stare?
No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep, or cows.
No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.
No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.
No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.
A poor life this, if full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.
William Henry Davies 1871 - 1940

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.--Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.
Wordsworth, 1806

A school is like a person

By John the Tour Guide Mentor

I just found this book. You must have already seen it. *Summerhill, a radical approach to child rearing*. This looks like THE school book. I just started reading it but i couldn't help copy out some pieces below. May get your interest.

Summerhill was a boarding school started in the 1920s in england with the idea of nothing compulsory, total freedom. Nobody had to go to class. The record, he said, was one girl played hookey for three years. The amount of time students avoided class depended on the severity of the damage the normal schools had done to them. Students and teachers voted on all the rules. One student was being punished for something and they voted that a week away from class was "too severe".

This turns school around 180. He doesn't believe in teaching. Sounds even more radical than what you guys and Enrique do. And sounds right. Very interesting. We can toss out the prison guard thing i mentioned from Dostoevsky, that the prisoners liked a guard who kept his dignity and separateness. After all a school shouldn't be like a prison.

Note by Steve: I had heard of Summerhill in a general sense (*"it's an alternative school, but I don't know what it offers and I don't know where it is"*). John is one of my mentors for reading. He finds and obsesses about a book until he "gets it." I compiled the transcripts of ten TED talks and printed them together, a packet of 28 pages. I pass that transcript to friends, colleagues, parents... and John is the only person I've met who carried the packet around with him, studying the words of Ken Robinson, Sugata Mitra, Dan Pink and a guy who advocates showing knives and matches to elementary school kids. I have this mental image of him standing, waiting for me to pick him up, and he was focused on that TED packet.

If you want the same packet, go to TransformTeaching.org and scroll down the Free Ebooks section (**TED Talks packet**). Or search on the site for “Free TED Talks Transcript about education.” There's another one called “**Dennis Littky Bill Gates Speech Education**” that you can find on Scribd.com.

Here's the main “take away” point: I would not be writing about Summerhill if John had not sent to me in an email his notes about the book. His practice of typing passages from books (as a form of study) has inspired me and moved me to focus on topics that I might not have studied at this time. John is a potential mentor to students at high schools and I encourage teachers to contact me so that I can connect you to John.



*John the Virtual Mentor took this photo
somewhere in the West.*

Being Green

By John the Tour Guide Mentor

I was thinking about this environmentalist business. what's it all about anyway? Here i am in the national parks with all these tooty fruity environmentalists and like all political causes or dominant theories that everyone accepts on cue I smell a rat. We drive around in our cars and sleep in nice warm shelters but for god's sakes don't step off the trail. we are seeing smog from those darn cities (the ones we chose to live in), they have to cut that smoke down, "for the health of the planet". the planet? When you think about what the planet has seen, the extinctions, the hundred million years of dinosaurs, the meteors, the climate change... we are supposed to worry about a little plastic? "Go green," says my bank statement. They mean more green in their wallets. Im glad the environmentalists are trying to grapple with our excesses because our excesses are ruining our lives but this business about the planet gets slippery. maybe the landfill will be a little smaller when the meteor hits.

Why should i care? For my kids? are we concerned about the planet or our kids? We get sidetracked talking about the planet and the cute little animals.

Environmentalism is really about us. Of all the objects in nature, we care mostly about ourselves. The best thing about the planet is that we are adapted to it. If i see a stranger being attacked by a bear i'm firing on the bear. Eco-friendly people don't just want raw nature untouched by man. Place them in the middle of a million untouched acres in the amazon. It isn't about the planet's survival or about an ecosystem without man, it's about the planet's ability to provide for our quality of life. The clean air, water, food we need. The clothing and shelter.

What about vehicles and computers? What is environmentally sound and what isn't? What about a factory that pollutes a river but produces a drug that cures cancer? Wouldn't you have to call it a green factory to be consistent? Plastic may contaminate some of the planet but on balance it seals out contaminants and germs and serves our needs in many ways. Green, right?



This is a screenshot from the video posted by Erik Friedl, who visited Highland Park High School in 2012. Here's a short transcript of what was said in the video (from minute 3:20): *“Our principal is a man... unlike other schools... it's just some suit with a face. Our principal has a personality. He gets through to us”*.

As a change of pace, I have inserted an opinion piece by a professor who suggests that the focus of many teachers on spelling has made the writing of millions of students less interesting. Professor Dennis Baron gave me permission to use this piece, which is copyrighted by the Chronicle of Higher Education. I should also request permission from that publication.

<http://illinois.edu/blog/view/25/52855?displayType=month&displayMonth=201105> Dr. Baron's post about commas. Go ahead, click.

Commas

By Dennis Baron

There's a reason to study grammar: it reveals the structure underlying human communication, and human communication is, well, it's what we do. But studying grammar won't help us communicate better any more than studying the internal combustion engine will help us to be better drivers.

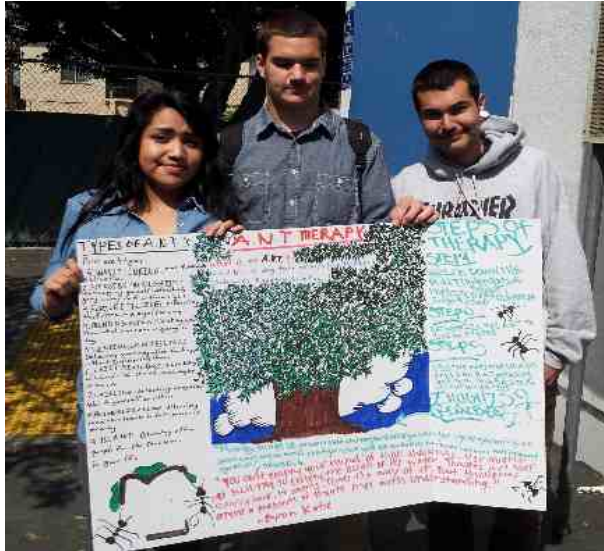
What can make writers better is more writing. Writing more doesn't always work: the best writers sometimes fall flat, the worst sometimes fail to improve, and the mediocre may stay stuck in the middle. But writing, both for practice and for real, works better to improve writing than sentence diagrams, comma drills, and mantras like "a noun is the name of a person, place or thing" (should there be a comma after place?). The problem, for the schools, is that writing takes time. It's a messy process. Improvement isn't linear. It requires one-on-one feedback from an engaged audience. It's labor-intensive. It can't be taught by machine. It's expensive.

On the other hand, writing is also something that, thanks to the digital revolution, more and more people are doing not just for work and school, but also voluntarily, for their own benefit. Schools tend to dismiss the kind of writing that appears on Facebook, Twitter, IM, texting, and blogs as trivial, even detrimental to the development of good writers.

But maybe we should rethink how we teach by looking at what writers do when they tweet and post. And that in turn might shed some light on what writers do when they write essays, poems, grant proposals, quarterly earnings reports, or constitutions. (Hint: they don't check Strunk and White every time they're not sure where to put the comma.)

See more at his Web of Language blog.

<http://illinois.edu/blog/view/25>



Here's another look at that ANT poster that some students created. (Photo provided by Ireland).

(Over)Consumption

By John the Tour Guide Mentor

i agree with these guys: let's try not to shoot ourselves in the foot by our excessive consumption. Let's not go too far against the natural balance that has been established through evolution. I am all for trying to not produce too many contaminants and wipe out too many species and to leave some untouched places to look at or to fish or hunt. Always for quality of human life. Now how about we expand the same discussion out from just the national forests and oil drilling, let's talk about how over consumption destroys our lives socially, even if it is sustainable environmentally. Apply the same standard beyond just the material resources to the social and emotional effects. Let's not just talk about having a sustainable supply of clean resources let's talk about what consumption does to towns, education, families, brains, to everything in our human nature. Let's talk about alienation and addiction to shopping. We need to see that, just like cutting down all the trees, we are only screwing ourselves here. If a suburban household produces three hundred gallons of garbage per week i don't think we should limit the discussion to recycling.

There is a bigger quality of life problem going on right now. ***What do you think the human environment is like in that house?*** The communication? Are the kids taught to be good people or are they taught to get a lot of money? What kind of jobs and hours do the parents have to work to pay for it? To what lows will they stoop? What effect do those jobs have on them as people? Are their needs met or sacrificed? Alright already with the planet, let's talk about the big pink elephant in the room. I suspect the whole green movement is another device created by consumerism to divert our attention, to make us think we are doing good while covering up over consumption. For its own survival the system would have us utilize resources efficiently so it can keep growing. An evil system could perpetuate itself through more environmentally sustainable practices. Don't stop buying, buy green. another marketing tool.

A great professor

By John the Tour Guide Mentor

I was thinking about taboos and about what my great **professor alasdair macintyre** drew attention to. He said in his lectures that taboos were rules enacted at a time and place when there was a reason for them but as time went on the reason for the taboo disappeared and the rule remained. You end up with a rule everyone follows but nobody knows why. He wanted to point out that in the modern world all morality has ended up in this state.

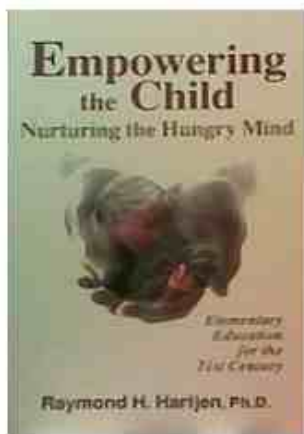
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alasdair_MacIntyre

If your students want to contact John, send the request to TheEbookMan@gmail.com.



A scene from Erik Friedl's video about Highland Park High School. www.YouTube.com/aiglon27

Raymond Hartjen has become a mentor for me. I've learned much from his writing on his website (which includes essays that he has compiled over his years of watching democratic schools like Sudbury, where students have a voice in how the school is administered). I'm posting two pieces here in the hope that you will be driven to visit his site educationFutures.org and perhaps look at his ebook about *Empowering the Child* (1994, converted to an ebook recently). You can write to Raymond at **rhartjen@hamptons.com**. If you like what appears here, use your mouse to click: He could use some hits on his two YouTube channels.



<http://www.educationfutures.org/Empowering.htm> You can read an excerpt from a chapter from the book at this link.

Lesson plans? You want lesson plans? The lesson plans are in front of me.

– Mario J. Llorente, teacher (*pointing to his students*)

Teachers need to know more about the minds of their students before they can begin to nurture them. It is here, at the very beginning, that this form of education splits from the traditional form. Traditionalists already know what they are going to do for these students before they ever meet them. Nurturing teachers can only devise their plans for guiding the children after they have met them and come to know their interests. Only then can the teacher/guide begin to help the children explore those interests. *Empowering the Child* by R. Hartjen

Hanging Out: A Critical Step in Becoming “A Fearless Communicator” by Ray Hartjen

This piece is from EducationFutures.org

The most difficult element of the Sudbury experience to explain to parents is the value derived from their children just hanging out. This paper will attempt to demonstrate that hanging out is a critical period that enables each student to find his/her self-confidence through an experience that defines the elements of conversation and yields a level of self confidence that one student labeled all graduates of Sudbury Valley as Fearless Communicators.

Hanging out is a cornerstone of the Sudbury experience. Finding one's voice in this arena for developing skills of self expression, is a critical step in the self confidence building sequence.

The process of hanging out has raised questions in my mind as it has in that of many parents. Jim Rietmulder, one of the founders of the Circle School, has said to me that it is the most difficult process to explain to parents. Many parents wonder, ***what earthly value is derived from my kid just hanging out with others for long periods of time?*** Observing the process in action yields little insight into the dynamics and importance of this time-consuming process.

With other objectives in mind I have spent some time reading all of this year's student defenses which are presented to the entire student body as one of the final steps prior to graduating from Sudbury Valley School. (Sudbury Valley School Journal, Vol. 30 No. 6, June 2001)

In most of the defenses the author covers his/her process of coming out or establishing a self identity in the hanging out arena. It occurred to me that these defenses represented a source of data that has been left untapped. I have now read and reread this years' 21 defenses in order to identify the critical elements of growth that most students seem to follow, especially those who have had a bad public school experience and transferred to Sudbury Valley for the last three to six years of their education.

Others have written about the transition process so I will not go into those details here other than to provide a brief outline of the experience. (See *Challenge of the Transition Time* by Deborah Lundbeck, Red Cedar School, Bristol, VT.) My focus is on what occurs as each child establishes a presence within the hanging out community. I will then discuss how other elements in the Sudbury experience reinforces and builds student communication skills yielding a graduating class of "Fearless Communicators."

Many incoming students arrive on campus with a very low level of self-esteem, having been truly defeated by the public school system. Some have been on anti-depressants, others with medications for ADHD. One student recalls, "*My guidance counselor told my parents that I would either have dropped out of school or would be dead by sixteen.*" All arrive impressed and unbelieving that a school such as Sudbury even exists.

As a whole, most are shy and find some secure place to begin the transition process. Some escape to the barn and find solace in the computers and slowly establish friendships among other computer geeks. Others find a secluded corner and immerse themselves in reading. Then, as one student put it, "*... I watched, I soaked in everything that was going on around me. I gave the false pretense of reading and just sat there, quietly watching everyone, in the middle of the school's old hub for social activity.*"

The time comes when an issue is raised that excites the listener to speak his/her mind. What is so impressive is that in this type of situation is that the opinion is heard and respected. The respect that is shown each individual by other more established students is a critical element in facilitating a newcomer's progress in building self-esteem. Friendships emerge within small groups and a student's social life at SV is launched. "*I started sitting in on conversations, talking briefly to people I had just met, and found myself wanting to learn.*"

One student commented once he had established himself among the card playing, game playing, forever talking group, he had come of age and began to believe in his own potential.

Another student states, *"One thing that amazed me when I first came were the conversations people were having, I mean here were kids, not even as old as I was, discussing world politics under their own free will!"* Later she goes on to say, *"You can learn much more about the world by talking to your peers than you can in any classroom. To this day, I still spend nearly every minute of my time at school talking to people."*

Another student wrote, *"I was inspired by the respect the community has for the individual and started to come out of my shell by initiating conversations. After noticing that I too was being treated with respect, I felt validated."*

In so many cases this process includes listening. For example: *"These days I find myself on the couch in the quiet room just relaxing and hanging out with my friends. I talk some but mainly listen to what other people say. I am trying to figure out life and it as an ongoing process."* Another relates, *"My time was spent talking with friends, playing outside, reading books, walking in the woods and always listening. So much of what I learned came from listening to other people."*

Somewhere in this mix a student experiences the Judicial Committee either through having been written up or through direct participation. At SV a student is invited, really obligated, to become a member of the J C. Here our once shy student is immersed in the "becoming a responsible citizen" dimension of the school. Issues must be carefully heard, pro and con arguments sought and discussed with judgments and consequences agreed to. Clear arguments are presented, critical thinking evolves and is reinforced in this setting. One's ability to look at the facts surrounding cases with the resulting consequences is an additional enabling element of future Fearless Communicator. *"Holding an official position was a really rewarding experience. During the spring of that year I was elected JC Clerk. The JC clerks are right at the center of the whole judicial process, and I think it is the most important position in the school's government."*

"...our JC was presented with a complaint to which I felt very strongly, and I vented my thoughts. It felt wonderful. I was listened to, and my views were respected. It was around that time that I realized how important the JC is to the school and how it really functions."

The final honing of communications skills comes as one gains sufficient confidence to speak out at school meetings. Forming arguments and presenting them to the attending body of students, (often exceeding 75), is a mind-daunting/confidence-building experience. Once overcoming the initial fright our student's confidence builds as he/she experiences being heard and responded to with respect. One student testifies to this by saying, *"Through my adventures in J.C. I learned important lessons about expressing my point of view and articulating my thoughts. These proved very handy once I started attending meetings of the Computer Corporation and the School Meeting, where I could raise my hand and have everybody listen to what I had to say."*

"Serving on JC not only helped me realize that my opinions were more important than I gave them credence, but it aided me in other ways. I felt confident enough to speak freely on the School Meeting floor, despite the fact that speaking in front of a crowd has always mortified me." "I started going to JC and School Meetings on a regular basis. At first I was inhibited to speak during School Meetings because for so long I was told that, as a student, my opinions were invalid, but this fear was quickly washed away by my strong opinions and the openness in which they were received. For the first time I felt I had a voice that mattered in my school community."

Other experiences such as internships and part-time jobs to support their growing needs further enriches a student's confidence in communication. *"Recently, I gave a security presentation in front of a few hundred people at the Microsoft TechNet Convention, which was held at the Hynes Convention Center. Preparing and delivering that presentation was one of the scariest things I have ever done. The good news is that it showed me that if I set my mind on something and give it strong enough effort, I will successfully complete it."*

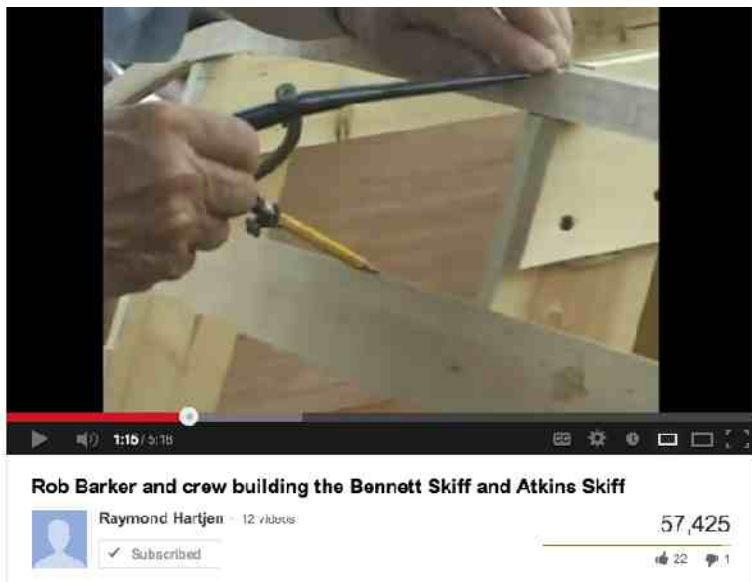
Highlighting these elements doesn't do service to the total SV experience. Once a student has overcome the initial shyness, he/she is immersed in a community whose survival is dependent on interpersonal communication. One more experienced than I could list the variety of experiences that constitute life at Sudbury Valley.

Repeating various aspects of this sequence over the course of three or more years yields an expert in the art of communication. "If someone were to ask me what the most important thing I have taken from my SVS education is, I would say, 'The ability to communicate fearlessly.' This seems to be an almost universal characteristic of SVS alumni, and having gained that skill alone is reason enough for me to be grateful for the years I've spent here."

This paper derives its power from the voices of the 21 Fearless Communicators in the Sudbury Valley School graduating class of '01.

Ray Hartjen, East Hampton, NY

rhartjen@hamptons.com February 1, 2002



A scene from **Dr. Hartman's boatbuilding video** on YouTube. Why not give it a click? **<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7Df39Zf32Y>**

Dr. Hartjen has written extensively about the Sudbury school system. Here is an excerpt from **his web post about Social IQ**,

Now I would like to present several documents I have come upon that further support the thesis that social skill development contributes to the intelligence of life coping skills. These documents present student outcomes, or behaviours which result from permitting extended free social interaction among children as they undertake their learning in a multiage classroom. These documents were written by teachers of multiage classes. The first anecdotal report comes in the form of two e-mail letters from teachers in Oregon. They have been teaching in a multiage classroom, grades K to 2. Their two letters follow.

e-mail from **Ellen in Edmonds** (WA State)

I just returned from awarding scholarships at our local high school to two graduating students that had gone through our multiage program from their 1st year. One of the parents mentioned that the high school kids are advising their friends and neighbours to get over to our multiage school and get their kids signed up. That is because they see that the multiage graduates are more responsible, capable, compassionate, involved, and have higher self-esteem.

Who needs the research when the living testimonies are all around? This was one of the greatest and most precious moments in my career. What we are doing not only works, it lasts a lifetime!

e-mail from a colleague of Ellen, **Janet Banks**

I wanted to second everything that Ellen has said. The awards we presented last night, were among many others in this high school awards ceremony. Students from our multiage program (now the Madrona School in Edmonds) were notable in number of awards and scholarships. Parents commented to me also, how happy they were that their children had the opportunity to attend out multiage school, as the characteristics Ellen mentioned have carried over throughout their middle school and high school years. Many of these students have been the leaders of the graduating class.

Students mentioned how much easier it was for them when they went to high school because of the friendships they had with students who were older, and how special it was to greet their younger friends when they joined them. Several of them said they'd never forgotten the warm, caring, positive atmosphere of our multiage classrooms, both from the teachers and other students. Friends of theirs, who were not in our program, commented that our students continually talk about their special grade school years.

These students are very self-confident, aware of their strengths, and have set great goals for their futures. I agree, this is what multiage is all about! The rewards for Students, parents, and teachers are real and wonderful.

Another e-mail is from a teacher who, being effected by my talking about the influence of social interaction on intelligence, began to reflect on how the graduates of her program were being successful in the years after they had entered middle school.

Marion Leier March 29, 1998

You know Ray, I think you are onto something that I have been beginning to realize - that the climate established in a multiage group DOES in fact contribute to the cognitive development, regardless of how "good" the teacher is. For example, last month my daughter's middle school sent home a newsletter. (This middle school takes the combined students from our elementary school and New Mines elementary school.) In the newsletter, they announced that 7, grade 7 & 8 students wrote the Canadian National Mathematics League Contest. FIVE of these students were former students of mine - including the first place student of each grade level! Now one could conjecture that I happen to have the most intellectually able children placed in my class - but you know that isn't true, because our principal is very careful about fair distribution of children. Okay..... am I a superior math teacher? I think I do a good job, but so do many of my colleagues at my school. I am convinced that it has more to do with the three year multiage climate of my class that gave them such a great start in school. The confidence and self esteem they developed certainly impacted on their achievement!

A final document comes from the thesis paper of a student graduating from Sudbury Valley. This student had left public school to spend her last two years at this very unusual school. She was close to dropping out of school, out of sorts with the world around her and estranged from her parents. In the very short span of two years she had turned her life around, became a loving considerate human being and had reconnected with her parents. A portion of her thesis is here for you to read for yourself.

Betsey Taft, April 28, 1998

Before I came to SVS, I wouldn't have been confident and stable enough to travel cross-country with Maggie on the adventure of a lifetime. If not for SVS, I'd never have sat in the Badlands under a vast black sky dotted with a billion bright stars. I'd never have found that learning is wonderful when no one's forcing you to do it. I'd never have applied to colleges where my opinions count and learning is a choice and a right. I'd never have made friends that I'd live or die for.

SVS has given me so much but most importantly, SVS gave me back my parents. They had been desperate to help me, but for years I had pushed them away. After years of severe rebellion and silence, the lines of communication between us slowly reopened. I began to respect my parents because I realized that they respected me. They allowed me to join this community because they hoped it would make me happier. It did! And because I am happier, they're happier and our words are no longer bitter. I've found a place for myself, an identity, so I don't need to run from them anymore.

How could I ever have been ignorant of the fact that my parents are amazing people? They are the most loving parents I could ever ask for and so accepting of me and my lifestyle. Anyone who's been in my house knows that they are fun, charitable and wise, and that they love to sing! Thank you, SVS, for helping me to sing with them again.

In all of the settings noted the students were educated in various forms of multiage classes. Some were in settings where only two years were present and in the extreme case the multiage ranged from five years to eighteen years, the full spectrum of elementary and secondary education.

So what is there about multiage education that brings about this profound difference? It is my thesis that as we open up the opportunity for social interaction we enable students to exercise a variety of interpersonal skills that empowers them to become proficient as, *"natural psychologists' who are able to take into account the consequences of their own behavior, to calculate the likely behaviors of others, to calculate benefits and losses - all in a context where the relevant evidence is ephemeral, likely to change, even as a consequence of their own actions."* (Humphrey)

Raymond H. Hartjen, 43 Old Fireplace Road, East Hampton, NY
11037 631-324-2490 rhartjen@hamptons.com
Go ahead, click here and see **Dr. Hartjen's video about boatbuilding.**
Then click on **EducationFutures.org.**

For Teachers and Administrators

How to Personalize the School Work

Here's what I learned from Enrique Gonzalez, Elliot Washor, Charles Mojkowski and Dennis Littky and Samantha Grabelle (*The Big Picture: Education is Everybody's Business*):

The future of education is in personalized learning.

One way to make the learning personal is to connect the school work with the real world.

The teacher of the future will listen more than preach.

The students of the future will talk to show what they have learned.

A note about standardized tests:

I teach “how to take a test” at a local college’s extension program. The course is usually taken by 15- and 16-year-old students who are prepping for university.

I have also worked in a charter school where the teachers serve as test proctors. Standardized written tests have limited uses and are often taken away – as a test proctor, I have not been able to make a copy of a student’s essay (written for a standardized test) because the test is supposed to be secret. The student put 45 minutes of his life into writing an essay and the test administrators say, “You can’t show that work to anyone.” How sad.

I could write more, but why? Take two minutes and go to Transform-Education.com, Dr. Fischler's website,

and then go to **TransformTeaching.org** to get some free ebooks.

Visit **BigPicture.org** and **MetCenter.org**.

Visit the Washor and Mojkowski website at **LeavingtoLearn.org**.



Visit the website

If you want more tips about how to personalize the learning, look at the videos posted on Erik Friedl's channel where Erik interviews Enrique Gonzalez.

Nightingale Middle School (a series of four parts)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QuYB07E7nIA>

For the Love of Learning (Highland Park High School)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A34AR57A1Eo>



Enrique Gonzalez describes Palabra and Clarity, two programs that help teens learn social skills. Enrique can be reached at egcg@me.com. The video's location is youtube.com/watch?v=A34AR57A1Eo

How to Find Mentors

This short chapter gives some tips about how I find mentors for my students. This could be expanded into a lengthy list of “to do”s but I want you to have a few ideas and then I hope you will contact me or contact other teachers and come up with additional ways to find advisors for your students.

Tip 1: Carry business cards with your email address and mobile phone.

I'm surprised by the number of teachers who don't pass around their contact info. “Oh, I'm off the clock when I'm off the campus.”
Ugh.

Instead, I hand the card to a person who gives good service, who smiles while talking to me and who speaks clearly. That's a potential mentor to one of my students.

Tip 2: Create websites and Facebook “fan groups” to highlight local artists and entrepreneurs.

Dan Pink has pointed out the importance of fostering the artistic mentality. See his books *Drive* and *A Whole New Mind* and his “MFA is the new MBA” talk. (Search: “mfa is the new mba dan pink”).

Here are some examples of some “fan groups” that I've started.

I found the youtube channel for Erik Friedl, a documentary film maker and websites for artists who attended my alma mater (high school) in the 1970s. Here are some links that I created:

Favorite charities: <https://sites.google.com/site/myaiglon/Home/our-favorite-charities>

Some of us in the class of 1976 like HYPERLINK "<https://sites.google.com/site/myaiglon/Home/jennie-hinde>" Jennie Hinde's charity to protect, house and educate orphans in Kenya HYPERLINK "<http://www.a-newdawn.org/>" _ Contact Don and Jennie at donjennie@wanadoo.fr.

Video about Jennie's charity...

"<https://sites.google.com/site/myaiglon/Home/jennie-hinde>" [Go to Jennie's personal page](#)

Aiglon Alumni Network

HYPERLINK "<http://www.freeenglishlessons.com/>" [AIGLON NETWORK](#) [CLICK here and look RIGHT](#) then click on "Aiglon Alumni Network"

LIST OF ARTISTS *(to get on this list, write to*

AiglonReunion@gmail.com) FB = there is a Facebook "fan group" for this artist. Jill Avery (Noebels) jillavery.com

HYPERLINK "<https://sites.google.com/site/myaiglon/Home/ramon-granda-cuba-story>" \n _blank [Ramon Granda](#) (find out about his book on Cuba) Gio Greppi Jessica McClam HYPERLINK

"<http://jessicamcclam.com/>" jessicamcclam.com

Jim Mitchell mitchellarts.com Can you suggest others? Who else can use a few more clicks on their youtube channels or websites.

While you are thinking... why not click on HYPERLINK "<http://www.youtube.com/aiglon27>" www.youtube.com/aiglon27 yes, Erik Friedl's channel.

I want to drive readers (and my other classmates) to click on these links. My classmates get the added hits and – who knows? – one or two of my current students might be inspired to contact one of my school mates. One of the problems that I've had when trying to contact an adult is “too busy to open email.” Well, I've got the Facebook account of some of my classmates. If a student writes to one of my classmates and doesn't get a response, at least I have an option to call or contact the person and ask for the person's attention.

Join a Facebook group of teachers who have students.

Write to the teachers who write something that inspires you. Show the resulting correspondence to your students. Your students might imitate your behavior and write to people who inspire them. Here's a group that an instructional technologist, Robert Maclachlan, started on Facebook. It's called the ITDE group (Instructional Technologies and Distance Education). Find it here:

[facebook.com/groups/ITDEnet](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ITDEnet)



Find interesting articles and share them with taxpayers. Sometimes people will respond by saying, “This is interesting.” That is the opening. You can find these articles at the following educational sites.

<http://www.educationrevolution.org/>

<http://gettingsmart.com/>

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/section/blogs/>

<http://chronicle.com/>

<http://edudemic.com/2012/08/education-blogs/>

oedb.org/library/features/top-100-education-blogs/

Connected Principals <http://connectedprincipals.com/>

Go ahead, just click. Add some page views to these valuable collections of posts. What is YourNetEffect.com?

Connected Principals

Sharing. Learning. Leading.

nt	Best Educational Practices	Change management	Communication	Distributed
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FedEx Prep: A Reflection

<http://connectedprincipals.com/archives/1430>

This blog post mentions an exercise called “20% time” or “go, follow your interest and learn something new, then tell us what you found out.”

Ask animated and “positive young adults” about their favorite teachers.

I met a receptionist at a hotel in Vaison-la-Romaine who smiled and spoke with confidence. “Where did you learn your English?” I asked. She replied, “Oh, at school. I had a wonderful teacher.” Aha! So I requested the teacher's name and contact info. Here are some of the tips that the teacher, Nadine Eyssartel shared with me (she uses the the email address of Fabrice Bernard):

De : Fabrice Bernard <fabrice396@aol.com>
A: TheEbookman <TheEbookman@mail.com>
Envoyé le : Di, 16 Sep 2012 19:40
Sujet : From Nadine EYSSARTEL, Lise Urban's former English teacher.

Hi Steve,
First of all, sorry to get back to you so late, but I got your message only yesterday. I don't know if I can help you much understand french teaching methods, but I 'll try to tell you how I personally work in my classes.



Source: traveljournals.net/pictures/220681.html

First let me tell you that I totally disagree on the new methods of "flipping the classroom", as for me it's absolutely useless and extremely difficult to manage and a waste of precious time. Moreover, I truly cannot see any benefit for the pupils. They get puzzled, that's all. It is much better in my point of view to keep the same kids all year long and try to help them improve , the best we can. But that is my own opinion about it so... Anyway I know that many teachers share the same opinion.

I've been teaching for 17 years now and since I started, I've always taught the same way; that is to say by being rigorous and strict when necessary, and by never leaving anything to chance as far as aims and objectives to reach are concerned. Furthermore, I've always started a school year by defining the rules in my class, that is to say what I want and expect from my students and what I don't want. I've always mentioned as well that our job, being a teacher is a "team job," meaning that they need me as much as I need them in order to do a good and satisfying job and reach the end of the school year with a maximum chance to get in the upper level or grade. My lessons have always been very structured, with "titles", "subtitles", and "clearly defined paragraphs" and grammar rules illustrated with an example, vocabulary explained by synonyms or English definitions rather than sheer translations.

Teaching a foreign language, according to me, requires oral expression of course and listening comprehension, but also a lot of writing, because it is the best way to remember things. and I don't agree with teachers who say that what is listened to, doesn't necessarily have to be written in the students' notebook. With the passing of the years and experience I've understood and realized that this method helps the poorest and less-gifted pupils; and I am convinced that this is true for every subject at school.

But, to tell you the truth, I don't think that there is "THE METHOD," teaching is not only made out of methods, teaching is first of all something like a "calling" and before thinking of efficient methods, a candidate to teaching should think twice to know whether he or she is really made to become a teacher. According to me, this job doesn't only require strong knowledge and method abilities, it is something you must feel deep inside yourself, as I said previously just like a calling. It is also a job for which you have to be "an enthusiastic actor", "a psychologist", "a tutor", "a role model", "a manager", "a leader", and also "a diplomat."

Well, I hope this will help you , I can modestly say that by teaching this way, so far it has been working pretty well for me and my kids, I've had good results in terms of grades and popularity and hopefully it will continue. I am reluctant to confess it , because I don't want to sound pretentious but most of my students seem to appreciate my methods. But as I said , I am convinced that there is not only one Method, but several.

Best regards.

Nadine EYSSARTEL (English teacher, JH FABRE
HIGHSCHOOL , in Carpentras)

PS: Say hello for me to Lise Urban when you see her.



Vaison-la-Romaine, where Nadine's student Lise Urban works in a hotel. Photo by www.JKMcCrea.com

So, I wrote to Nadine to ask for permission to use her words in this book (again, I'm showing you every step I've taken so that your students can read this book and see what micro-steps might help them with their quest for a mentor):

-----E-mail d'origine-----

De : Steve McCrea <tlasteve@gmail.com>

A: Fabrice Bernard <fabrice396@aol.com>

Cc: Steve McCrea <happyteacher@gmail.com>

Envoyé le : Lu, 17 Sep 2012 17:04

Sujet : I like your definition of the TEAM JOB... and the "Calling." Wonderful advice. I am so happy that you could write back to me.

I really like your message. Can I post it on my website? I'd like to give you credit. Is it okay to put your email address, too? perhaps some of my readers will contact you someday.
Steve

Nadine wrote back:

Hi Steve,
Sure , you can post my mail on your website. I would be flattered if my vision of teaching could help someone. You are also allowed to put my email address as well; that makes sense, of course.

I'm glad to read that you liked what I wrote about teaching. It's always nice to help, even people we don't know. Don't hesitate if you have further requests .

Talk to you later.

Nadine Eyssartel

Give a DVD to people who impress you.

I compiled a DVD of excellent educational videos and ebooks (Dan Pink's Flip Manifesto, videos from TED Talks, etc. You can request this DVD by sending me your email address and a postal address.) Of course, I share this DVD with people who have given me good service and I say, "I'd like to invite you to become a mentor to one of my students. Would it be okay if one of my students contacts you by email?" That's how I got the email addresses of more than fifty potential mentors.

Find a peer mentor (like Faizul in Malaysia).

I looked at the comments section of the TED.com website that featured a discussion about Sugata Mitra's latest idea (search "sugata the school in the cloud" on YouTube.com).

I was stunned to read this "open letter" written by a teenager. I decided to adopt him as a mentor for my students (I hope that some of my students take time to write to Faizul).

What can we do? - an open letter to teachers - promoting the flipped learning

1/205/17/13 A conversation on TED.com

by Faizul Zuraimi <faizulzuraimi@gmail.com>

www.ted.com/conversations/18310/what_can_we_do_an_open_lett.html

As Sir Ken Robinson ended his talk with Benjamin Franklin's quote , "There are three sorts of people in the world: Those who are immovable, people who don't get, they don't want to get it, they're going to do anything about it. There are people who are movable, people who see the need for change and are prepared to listen to it. And there are people who move, people who make things happen."

Let's be the type of people who move. Instead of questioning "why has the education system not changed yet?" or " why didn't the government take any initiative to change?", **I believe we should act within our circle of influence.** It is the question of "What can we do about it?" *What can we do about our education system? How can we improve it as students, teachers or parents?*

As a student myself, I've been working on promoting the flipped learning, as I believe it is one of the first steps in progressing ourselves for change. Here is an open letter to teachers out there, <http://faizulzuraimi.blogspot.com/2013/05/an-open-letter-to-teachers-my-name-is.html> and do visit my blog as well: faizulzuraimi.blogspot.com

"Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself," as mentioned by John Dewey, one of the figures in the Progressive Education Movement in the late 19th century. Perhaps we, too, can be one of those "movable people." Perhaps there shall be a Digital Age of Progressive Education Movement. It all begins with one simple question: **"What can we do?"** I would love to see your opinions :)

Related Talks:

Ken Robinson says schools kill creativity

Sugata Mitra shows how kids teach themselves

Kiran Bir Sethi teaches kids to take charge

Ken Robinson: Bring on the learning revolution!

Sugata Mitra: The child-driven education

Salman Khan: Let's use video to reinvent education

Daphne Koller: What we're learning from online education

Sugata Mitra: Build a School in the Cloud

Geoffrey Canada: Our failing schools. Enough is enough!

Ken Robinson: How to escape education's death valley

Faizul assembled that list of videos. So, here's this young fellow who has invested at least an hour of his life into listening about "how education could be..." and he posted this letter. The next step is "How do I get my students interacting with Faizul?" How can I get Faizul to become a virtual mentor for my students? Perhaps some of his "out of the box" approach and thinking will rub off on my students.

I posted the following message on the TED Talks discussion board:

Nice idea Faizul. I have 4 GB of videos and ebooks that I can send you . Send me your postal address and I'll send you the DVD. TLASteve@gmail.com you can also download many items from www.TransformTeaching.org and www.Transform-education.com lots there to support the flipped classroom.

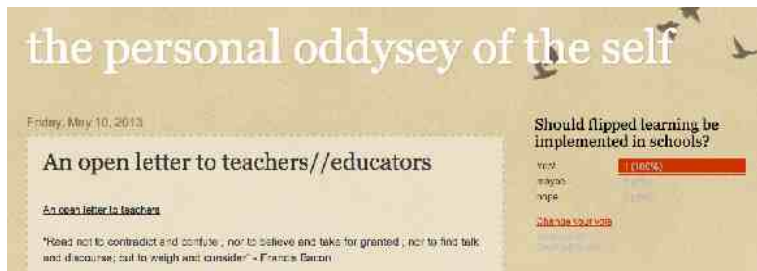
Faizul sent me his email address. I wrote to Faizul, sending him some ebooks.

On Sat, May 18, 2013 at 1:30 AM, Steve THE EBOOK MAN McCrea <theebookman@gmail.com> wrote:
i hope you like these ebooks. Why not share them with schools in your city?

Here is Faizul's reply:

Thanks a lot Steve! I find this very helpful!! I'll share this with the principal in my school and I'll also spread this information to other Malaysian teachers.
Thanks a lot,
Faizul

Wow. If you would like to contact Faizul, write to:
Faizul Zuraimi <faizulzuraimi@gmail.com>



Faizul's blog
<https://twitter.com/FaizulZuraimi>
faizulzuraimi@gmail.com

YourNetEffect.com

What is the effect (the net impact) of your work? What trail did you leave behind yesterday?



This is a play on words with “net” and “Internet.” We're talking about the sum of the pluses and minuses of your time on the internet. Perhaps you clicked a positive video

and then you clicked on an amusing “light-hearted” video like “Charlie bit my finger!”

Boost Your Internet Impact

- > Harness the power of online applications
- > Sharpen the Net skills of your students
- > Connect the Internet to your class activities
- > **Learn how you can increase your Klout**

Here's a suggestion to educators: **Ask students to add interactive media to your courses.** Even if there is no Internet access in the

classroom, **homeplay** [not homework] **can be assigned for students to do out “in the real world.”**

For students who live in countries where their access to the Internet is limited, how can teachers prepare students to influence the Internet indirectly? Could they text friends in other countries who have Facebook accounts and ask the friends to post a comment?



Students need a safe place to make mistakes on the Internet. Yes, sometimes we need to practice making mistakes in order to understand how an internet account is connected to other accounts. Ah, how about school? That's where we practice for real life.

What if students had access to Facebook accounts that were assigned to them for school purposes? Their facebooking can be specifically done as a lesson plan in guiding you through the following types of interactive media.

In fact, it might make sense to explore every other piece of interactive media before including Twitter, Facebook and Youtube (since students already have some experience with those sites).

[**Quora.com**](#) is Facebook for ideas.

[**Stumbleon.com**](#)

[**Tumblr.com**](#)

Websites

[**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites)

[**bookmarking sites**](#)

[**en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_bookmarking_websites**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_bookmarking_websites)

Can students stand and describe without notes the prime focus of these interactive connective media?

How can these tools be used to turn students into effective marketing machines that are useful to organizations?

What can a student write to turn the attention of other students onto the item?

For example, my uncle published an autobiography. What can each of us do to help my uncle's book increase in popularity on **amazon.com**?

http://www.amazon.com/Making-Adventures-Plastic-Surgeon-ebook/product-reviews/B006MFSUK4/ref=cm_cr_dp_all_helpful?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=1&sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending

See my review and get an account on **amazon.com**, then write a review.

Thank you for your clicks!

Here's my experience. I started a page on Facebook for Distance Education Day on 30 January and had 350 "likes" by February 8, 2012. How can students do better than their teacher?

What tips do students discover or learn about through experimenting to improve the visitor's experience on a website?

Many students will become valuable members of an interactive community of employees if they ably use interactive media. What is a skillful use of Youtube, Facebook and other interactive sites?

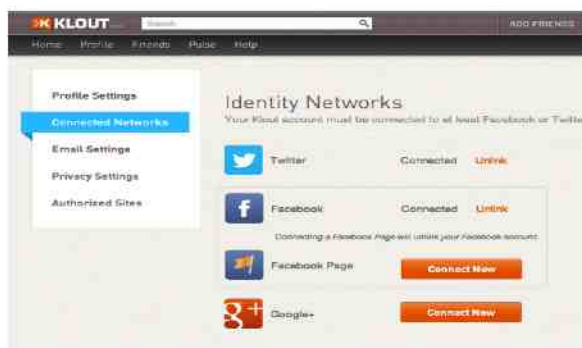
What media would you use to promote a company's new calendar item? (answer: it depends...)

Where do you maintain an account? Do you have accounts on any of the sites mentioned in this document?

There is a service called **Klout.com** ... it counts the number of interactions (it does not analyze for quality but gives a premium for people contacting you...)

Show appreciation for others.

"please click here"...



Here's a link to a short history of this book and this course **“Building Your Net Impact: How to guide teenagers to use their web time more effectively”** .

The Story behind “Your Net Impact”

I started writing parts of this book in 1996 when I asked my students to prepare for university by writing letters to the editor. We each have impact in our community through what we say and write – and “impact” “effect” and “influence” are what teenagers want. Ultimately, universities and employers want their communities of students and employees to have a “positive net impact” on the world.

I decided on 1 March 2012 to compile a series of courses for educators in a variety of countries in connection with promoting my book **Let's Lecture Less (lectureless.com)**. I'm working with Mario Llorente on a short summary about “What is humanistic education?” and “What projects could we use in schools to imbue our classes with the philosophy of preparing students for a world that hasn't been created yet?” I asked, **“What is your net impact? What is your net effect? What is your influence?”** Some people measure “clout” with sheer numbers: How many messages have you sent? How many websites have your fingerprints (comments, likes, subscription, follows? How influential are your posts, comments, recommendations and reviews?

I searched for the term: **“your net presence.”** Too stuffy and there’s a chance that people might not confuse the spelling: Net presents? I want my students to have an impact and an effect on the world. I’m especially pleased when students who have average test scores see that there are other ways to grab attention of college admission officers with their “net impact” on the world.

I selected three domain names, **yourNetEffect.com**, **YourNetImpact.com**, **YourInternetEffect.com**. I seek collaboration with authors who have material that will improve this thesis: **Students need to develop skills for effectively influencing and working with others.** A course about “your net impact” aims to build skills in students so that they will be ready to have an effective and positive impact on the Internet.” Can you suggest readings and activities to put this aim into action?

A book about Virtual Mentors is all about the “internet effect” of an adult. What is the impact of our absence (what is the perceived presence)?

References for readings (*please suggest more*)

Social Media Mistakes

<http://www.newcustomerworkshop.com/7-social-media-blunders-you-dont-even-know-youre-making>

Ted Demopoulos

<http://www.effectiveinternetpresence.com/articles/effective-internet-presence.pdf>

Here is a screenshot from an online course about “Your Net Impact” that I posted on YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxd_MT6T0IY



Some important ways to participate online...

The Making of This Book

I visited Highland Park High School on 26 February 2013 and again on February 28. I offered to guide students in the making of a digital yearbook (\$2 each) and a yearbook printed by CreateSpace.com (\$8 in black and white, \$10 in color). Their graduation is takes place around the last week of May.

Hmmm. A group of dedicated kids with a camera and a computer could put together a yearbook using standard word processing software in about five days.

Photos and writing = 4 days

Proof reading and uploading to Createspace = 3 days ++ PDF

Then wait two days for the approval = 2 days

Place the order and wait for printing = 11 days

Shipping time = 8 days to go from South Carolina to Los Angeles.

Total: 28 days. If the students can start work on May 1, they could have the finished printed book by May 29. How easy is it? Six steps can lead you to uploading the document. Start at **www.CreateSpace.com**. (I finished this page on May 23, so I hope this will inspire students at Highland Park to compile a Yearbook on DVD and perhaps a PDF file with contributions from many students...)



Step 1: Sign up for an account at CreateSpace.

Start Your New Project

1 Tell us the name of your project * Required

How to Become a Virtual Mentor

You can change your title at any time before you submit your project for review.

2 Choose which type of project you want to start *

☒ Paperback ☐ Audio CD ☐ DVD

☐ MP3 ☐ Video Download

3 Choose a setup process *

☒ Guided A step-by-step process with help along the way. ☐ Self-guided

Get Started

Step 2: Type in the name of the book

createspace
an Amazon company

Books Music Film Free Publishing Resources Member Spotlight My Account
Hi, JK! (Log out) Site

How to Become a Virtual Mentor
Title ID: 4260274

[Return to Project Home](#)
[Return to Member Dashboard](#)

Create
Setup
Title Information
ISBN
Interior
Cover
Complete Setup
[Setup Instructions](#)
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... And that's the beginning of the process that turns a word file into a book. If the students want an electronic result, the PDF could be done in a week. They could start on May 22 and get a finished PDF to post on Scribd.com and on a Google Drive account by May 29.

So I aimed to toss this book together in two days (by April 26) so I could send an ebook to the students (a) as a demonstration of the features of electronic and CreateSpace publishing

...and (b) as a tribute to Enrique Gonzalez and his campaign to personalize learning.

There's also (c) as an invitation to those students to go ahead: You can create a book that says, **“I want to share the story of Highland Park High School”** and **“I respect the work that I’ve completed here”** and **“We are a small school. Hear us roar.”**

I hope by presenting this information that the mystery of “how to make a book” will be removed and more students will push forward to get their school work in print and in ebook forms. As Dennis Littky points out in *The Big Picture*, school work becomes more important to the teenager when it is real work, when somebody “out there” is expecting the teenager to deliver something valuable.



This photo has nothing to do with CreateSpace. I hope it inspires you to look up Lewis and Clark and experience a bit of what John the Virtual Mentor saw on his trip.

waymarking.com/waymarks/WMFJ6Y_Lewis_Clark_at_Whitehouse_Pond

Let's review the heart of the first chapter:

The future of education is in personalized learning.

The teacher of the future will listen more than preach.

The students of the future will talk to show what they have learned.

These ideas come from chats with Enrique Gonzalez and years of thinking about the basic messages in *The Big Picture: Education is Everybody's Business* (Dennis Littky with Samantha Grabelle).

Standardized written tests have limited uses and are often taken away (so that students can't discuss their answers) – as a teacher, I have not been able to make a copy of a student's essay (written for a standardized test) because the test is supposed to be secret, “secure” and “valid.” The student put 45 minutes of his life into writing an essay and the test administrators say, “You can't show that work to anyone.” How sad.

I've asked you, the reader, to click on many links. Please look at the remarkable plan for Nightingale Middle School on the New Learning Institute's website. Enrique Gonzalez introduced me to this document. Search: “new learning institute nightingale initiative”



<http://media.newlearninginstitute.org/downloads/NightingaleInitiative.pdf>

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Spirit Magazine, the magazine for Southwest Airlines, is a particularly good source of authentic reading for students.

<http://www.spiritmag.com/>

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Here's another photo taken at Highland Park High School.

I was inspired to make this book by some students at Highland Park High School. They created three posters for me when I visited their classroom. Their attention to detail moved me to make this effort.

It is more enjoyable to “have written”
than to “write” or to “be in the
middle of writing” a book.
My wife makes the writing easier by
shielding me from the real world.
Thank you, JK.

Teachers: Perhaps you will hear the essential message of the Big Picture by Dennis Littky. The main job of teachers is to get to know their students well. Teachers can then seek out mentors (and urge their students to seek out mentors) who can create opportunities and places to explore the passions of the next generation. I hope some of those mentors will be virtual.



Learn more at www.BigPicture.org and at www.MetCenter.org.

ascd.org/publications/books/104438/chapters/The-Real-Goals-of-Education.aspx
(free look at the first chapter)

ascd.org/publications/books/104438/chapters/One-Student-at-a-Time.aspx
(free look at Chapter 4)